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Paul Introduces Legislation to Restore Local Ownership of Federal Water Project

Washington D.C.- Legislation introduced by Congressman Ron Paul to transfer ownership of the Lake Texana/Palmetto Bend project to the State of Texas was approved by unanimous consent of the House Resources committee today, setting the stage for final passage of the bill later this year. H.R. 2674, the "Palmetto Bend Conveyance Act", will allow the State of Texas to act through the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority (LNRA) to purchase the federal interest in Lake Texana and restore local control of water rights. The legislation follows ongoing efforts by Congressman Paul, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), and LNRA staff to transfer ownership of the project away from the federal government. "The State of Texas should own and control the water flowing through Lake Texana" Paul stated. The LNRA has demonstrated it can manage the project in a more economical manner. This legislation will take ownership away from the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which will benefit the citizens of Jackson County." The bill will allow the LNRA to assume full ownership of the project, reducing operating costs by eliminating management by federal authorities. Charles Hasdorff, President of the Authority's Board of Directors, stated the "LNRA hopes that it will be able to acquire the project from the United States and decrease the cost of water to its customers, without reducing the benefits of the project to the public. We look forward to managing Lake Texana in an environmentally sound manner for the benefit of the public and all citizens of Jackson County. We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated lawmaker in Washington protecting the local interest." Municipal and industrial customers in Jackson and Calhoun Counties will use water supplied by Lake Texana. The federal Bureau of Reclamation recently completed its final environmental assessment of the impact of transferring title of the Palmetto Bend project to the LNRA. No direct adverse environmental impacts were identified. "Local control of resources is critical," Paul concluded. "People know that management by federal regulators is less efficient. Local control will result in better conservation of resources and the elimination of policies that have encouraged the inefficient use of water. I will continue my efforts to restore this federally controlled project to the people of the State of Texas."

